

an expression which is, probably, to be figuratively,
not literally, apprehended.

The notion of a soul of the world belongs, no doubt, to a period long subsequent to the composition of the *SuJctas*. Whether their authors entertained any belief in a creator and ruler of the universe certainly does not appear from any passage hitherto met with; but, at the same time, the objects of the early worship of the Hindus — fire, the sky, the *Soma* plant, even the sun,—are addressed in language so evidently dictated by palpable physical attributes, or by the most obvious allegorical personifications, that we can scarcely think they were inspired by any deep feeling of veneration or of faith, or that the adoration of such mere and plainest elements contemplated them in any other light than as types of the power of a creator. However extravagant the expressions, we can scarcely imagine them to have been uttered in earnest, particularly as proceeding from men of evident talent and observation, endowed with more than common intellectual activity and acuteness of perception.

Leaving the question of the primary religion of the Hindus for further investigation, we may

now consider what degree of light this portion of the *Veda* reflects upon their social and political condition. It has been a favourite notion, with some eminent scholars, that the Hindus, at the period of the composition of the hymns, were a nomadic and pastoral people. This opinion seems to rest solely upon the frequent solicitations for food, and for horses and cattle, which are